

Greetings Committee Chair for the Expansion of Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act,

I am writing to you and ask that you assist us to ensure our voice is heard. Below is my message:

I am taking some time to write about a concern that I have and I appreciate your time to hear my family's voice. We are concerned about the expansion of Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act in any way shape or form. Although House Bill 5959 and House Bill 5804 are well intentioned bills, they are based on naiveté. I am convinced that the end result would cause an imbalance of justice and freedom to those who base their personal standards on religious beliefs founded on their ancient code of standard.

I believe the intent of the guarantee of religious freedoms was not just about a person's selection of a church to attend, rather it is their way of life. I believe we would do much better protecting everyone's rights and freedoms and not those of just a few.

I will divulge a little about myself, so that you can identify whose voice I represent. I have a Doctorate degree in Evaluation, Measurement, and Research. I started out from a poor family and worked my way in industry as a blue collar professional with some administrative experience thrown in. I then worked to teach my trade to students while bettering myself on the ladder of education, all while raising a child. I currently have a family and we have reviewed and discussed the materials on these bills. Please do not lead us down this wrong road again as I am quite certain all of the ripples are not foreseeable. These bills represent bad policy and bad politics in the long run.

Please let me know if you have any questions or comments.

Thank you,

David, Jennie, and Cissie MacQuarrie

269-254-2075

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David L. MacQuarrie, Ph.D.
Personal Account
davidmacquarrie@firstassess.net

Testimony to the Commerce Committee

12/03/2014

Mira Krishnan (616) 458-3511
Chief Executive Officer mira.krishnan@grlgbt.org

The Network www.grlgbt.org



Dear Chairman Foster and esteemed members of the Commerce Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in favor of HB 5804 to amend the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act in a *fully inclusive* fashion, protecting Michiganders from discrimination based on gender identity and expression as well as sexual orientation. I firmly believe both protections are needed, and that HB 5959 does not go far enough.

I want to speak to you from two lenses. First, for the past three years, I have been creating healthcare jobs in West Michigan. My team and I have created almost 30 full time jobs in three years. My people gain in-demand skills in autism treatment, and they change kids' lives. I mostly recruit young people leaving higher education, but I also recruit talent nationally. And I *market* West Michigan. To do so, I talk about our amazing local food and breweries, our arts, our theatre. I talk about the visionary steps Grand Rapids has taken, like passing protections similar to those in HB 5804. In this light, West Michigan looks a lot more appealing to outsiders who've been taught we're just another bolt in the "rust belt." I use these stories, too, to convince Michigan graduates to stay here and invest rather than moving out of state. It works, in large part, because of the inclusive and vibrant place Grand Rapids has become. If you look to the future in Michigan, you should look to Grand Rapids. And as someone out there creating jobs and building the local economy there, passing this fully inclusive bill, that sends the message that Michigan as a whole, like Grand Rapids, is open for *everybody* to come to work, and is seeking to be fully (and not half) world class, is exactly what we need to continue building this state back up and making it a great state again.

My second lens, and my second job, is advocating on behalf of the LGBT community. After many years of prayer and reflection, I came out as transgender, in Grand Rapids. This process started almost a year ago and culminated with me finally living authentically in all parts of my life in July. I was met with overwhelming support and graciousness. My community recognized the risk I was taking and was courageous alongside me. I got, unlike many people, to be myself without having to sacrifice any of the people I love in my family, my neighborhood, my civic life, or my professional network. I didn't face discrimination, either in housing or in the workplace. I just got to continue using my talents right here in Michigan. Except it was finally *me* in my home, and not some stranger staring at me in the mirror. In today's Michigan, where I can be fired or denied housing based on being transgender, this makes me "one of the lucky ones."

Revising ELCRA creates a level playing field for all of us, including LGBT Michiganders. But, I don't want to escape or avoid the fact that I'm asking you, as legislators and leaders, to do this for "people like me." I am. But I mean it in both senses: people like me who are LGBT, and people like me who are trying to build something great here in Michigan. We all benefit when Michigan takes steps to open its doors for all people to come to work, and when Michigan lets us builders build and innovators innovate. For this reason, again, please move forward with the fully inclusive HB 5804, and continue to help me make Michigan great again. Thank you very much for your time.

I do not support the expansion of Elliott-Larsen and that State Government should protect freedoms for all, not just a few. Please vote against both House Bills 5959 and 5804.

John Hodsdon

1827 Smallbrook Dr.

Troy 48085

Dear Commerce Committee Members:

It has come to my attention that you will be taking up H.B. 5959, shortly. I would like to encourage you to turn down voting for amending the Elliot-Larson Civil Rights Act, for several reasons.

Our Constitution already guarantees individual rights. It does not guarantee "group" rights. Therefore, those who would be singled out as a "specially protected class" of individuals, based on their sexual orientation, are already protected under our U.S. Constitution and therefore protected under Michigan law. To single them out in this manner, allowing them to use the force of onerous regulations to advance a popular political agenda, would have a chilling and deleterious effect on Michigan businesses, religious organizations and private citizens. By selecting one class to "protect," you would be subjecting another class of citizens to bullying tactics and expensive lawsuits.. Your decision to amend the bill in this manner would essentially have the effect of potentially violating the livelihood of anyone who chooses to object to this law by exercising their right to hold to their traditional views of family and sexuality, and that by doing otherwise, would be a violation of their own conscience. Across the country, proponents of this type of legislation are forcing business owners into shutting their doors because they are not willing to violate their own conscience.

Government should not be in the business of "protecting" one class of people while violating the freedom of religion and conscience of another.

I sincerely hope that you will choose to vote "NO" on amending the Elliot-Larson Civil Rights Act and vote, instead, to maintain the Constitutionally protected rights and personal liberties of all citizens.

Sincerely,

Regina Brim

Member of Oakland County Executive Committee

First, let me state my objection to this bill being brought forward in lame duck; there is a new legislature being seated in just a month and any "law: that affects our citizenry ought not be brought forward where it can be influenced by those who, because of their particular stance, can affect change as they

are leaving office. In this case particularly, Mr. Foster, who was proven to "miss-speak" in his campaign when addressing Elliot-Larson, was soundly defeated by his Republican opponent accordingly yet he is trying to bring the bill forward even though his constituency said "NO!".

Second, both Foster and Speaker Bolger have revealed their true character in that they are in the position where there is no longer the "fear" of voter response to what they propose; Bolger, because of term limits; Foster, because of defeat. Couple that with their acceptance of \$50,000 and \$25,000 respectively from the homosexual crowd shouts of their willingness to be bought off for "filthy lucre." It is obvious there is no shame in their makeup but that does not mean this committee, whose individuals are supposed to represent citizens of Michigan, have to kowtow to these members. In fact, Mr. Foster, of whom the Democrats named him "Free Lunch Frank," has shown his colors again.... Speaker Bolger, also.

Lastly, for committee members, I urge you to listen to the folk that voted you into office when this bill is brought forth. It is more than evident that Elliot-Larson has no bearing on homosexual rights (there is no proof those rights have been violated and courts are now upholding states rights, accordingly) and that the general populace will be adversely affected by its passage. I urge you to soundly defeat Mr. Foster's agenda.

Respectfully,

Clifford Jones
Indian River, MI

Greetings,

I just wanted to send along a quick email before your meeting this morning to let you know that I strongly support the Elliott-Larsen Discrimination Act. I believe that all minority groups deserve protection from discrimination. Thank you for your time and for sharing my input during the committee meeting.

Regards,

Michelle Chapman

I would like it to be known that I do not support the passing of HB 5959 or HB 5804. These bills are not needed and will cause more harm than good. Please have this e-mail entered into public testimony. My name is Debra Eifert, I live in Mason my zip is 48854. Thank you for your time, Debra Eifert.

House Commerce Committee Testimony

My name is Julie Nemecek. I am a resident of Spring Arbor, Michigan. I am an ordained Baptist minister and I have faced significant discrimination for being transgender. I strongly urge

the committee to include "gender identity" and "gender expression" language in any amendment to the Elliot Larsen Civil Rights Act.

In 2005 I shared my transgender diagnosis with the Michigan university where I worked. Even though this conservative Christian school taught the standards of care that I was following, I faced significant discrimination such that I felt compelled to file an EEOC complaint in 2006. The original complaint is included with this testimony and was later amended to include retaliatory acts committed by the university. In March 2007 I reached a mediated settlement with the university and ended an exemplary career with this institution.

I had led the university's entrance into online education, developed and led the accreditation for most of the university's graduate programs, was recognized for my outstanding teaching, and even delivered a commencement address. Despite this background and my educational qualifications, I was unable to find full-time employment even though I submitted over 300 applications over the next six years for positions for which I was eminently qualified. I did reach the final interview stage on numerous occasions, but was never offered a position even though a corporate head hunter said I gave the best interview he had ever heard.

My situation is not different from most transgender people. Collectively, transgender people are significantly under-employed or unemployed. We face discrimination in many ways including employment, health insurance, and healthcare, even though the American Medical Association defines being transgender as a "serious medical condition" (2008 resolution of the AMA).

I encourage the committee to review the significant research on the discrimination transgender people face. A copy of this comprehensive study can be found at http://www.thetaskforce.org/static_html/downloads/reports/reports/ntds_full.pdf.

Please help end the pain being caused to individuals and families by discrimination against these citizens of Michigan. Thank you.

Rev. Dr. Julie Nemecek
7047 Gilroy Ct.
Spring Arbor, MI 49283

julie.nemecek@comcast.net

Please oppose both bills 5959 and 5804. The citizens of Michigan have already spoken regarding what marriage must be. We do not now need to add gays and lesbians as a protected class in our state. We've seen in other states what happens when bills like this pass. For example, in Colorado and Oregon businesses have been taken to court because they refuse to serve people who violate their religious convictions. Bills like 5959 and 5804 will only serve to bring about court cases in Michigan as well where religious rights are violated.

Thanks,

Bryan Rubingh

2344 Gilbert Rd.

Lansing, MI 48911

Good morning. My name is Brian Doy Baker and I live in Mount Pleasant. I'm here because of a great organization called PFLAG: "Parents, Family, Friends and Allies United with LGBTQ People." PFLAG is a place where parents can find advice and wisdom that can help them understand their children when they discover their child's sexual orientation or gender identity is not what they expected. It's an organization that welcomes all. When our younger son told us he was gay, we realized our acceptance of his sexual orientation would determine his acceptance of himself – and that more than ever, our love for him was crucial.

Our involvement in PFLAG gave us opportunities to meet and talk with a wide variety of people, including transgender. Their struggles, and obstacles they faced, were different from our son's, but their innate humanity and worth were the same. Like our son, their potential to face problems was not because of their difference, but because other people did not understand that difference.

All human beings are born with the potential to love another person. But who we find attractive is not something we decide for ourselves. That script is written for us. It's something we discover as we approach adulthood. To allow ignorance and prejudice based on something innate is a mistake.

As a father I am proud of my son – as proud as any parent. My boy's sexual orientation worried me, but only because I knew there are bullies in this world. Bullies can be stopped by ordinary people who know how to speak out and intervene. The solution to bullies is for everyone to maintain the same expectation of what's acceptable. But I believe we must begin that by writing those expectations into our laws.

Because of my son's mostly unimportant difference, I have a deeper understanding of other people who face broader prejudice and lack of understanding. That's why I call on you to include gender identity and expression in the protections in our civil rights laws. If those words aren't there, our schools and civic institutions won't spend the time to protect them. With the potential for bullying and other prejudices, laws must have those protections spelled out.

At PFLAG I met a transgender woman who wanted to start a new business. She needed licensing and to obtain it she was planning to go back in the closet for a few months. To start a business, you have to hide who you are inside?

A young man I know wasn't sure he would have his family's support if he told them he was gay. His employer offered to let him sleep in their store if his family threw him out. So if you're gay and not yet able to support yourself, keep your mouth shut.

If you wonder what a transgender teen looks like, go to any homeless shelter in New York City. There are thousands there. Thousands. The National Center for Transgender Equality says of 1.6 million homeless youth, 20-40% are LGBT.

If you're transgender and have been kicked out of your home, shelters will expect you to behave as if you're not transgender – so don't tell the truth or you'll be on the street.

It's not enough for federal housing regulations to give protection. Law determines behavior. State Law sets standards for the State's citizens. The compulsory nature of Law has the effect of forcing us to consider what's right. If you include sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, you will save lives and protect children from prejudice, and ultimately violence. If you don't, you will by omission allow bullying to continue.

I'm proud that my home town and the township that surrounds it both have ordinances prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression. I helped canvass my own neighborhood and we found such protection for jobs and housing had the support of 82% of registered voters. But there are efforts here in the Michigan House to circumvent ordinances like ours, and that's a case of the state denying our city the freedom to decide for itself what's right.

Our elected leaders have an obligation to protect the few against the whims or wishes of the majority; that's why our nation is a Republic and not a simple Democracy. Institutions always face pressures that

force them to guard and conserve their resources. This means school districts and civic governments will not provide protection or make provisions for a misunderstood minority unless they're forced to by that minority's inclusion in the law. My experience as a father has taught me so much about sexual orientation and gender identity that I applaud and welcome this chance to add these protections, but the inclusion of the words "sexual orientation" and "gender identity and expression" is vital. It's time to protect those who are discounted because they are misunderstood. It's time to lead.

Brian Doy Baker

1030 South Dr

Mount Pleasant MI 48858

989-854-6089

FYI Since I work a full time job I can not attend the meeting in Lansing in regard to bills HB5959 and HB5804. I OPPOSE both of those bills in defense of the Marriage Act. Please enter my opposition to those in your files. Veronica Finch, 3251 Swarthout Rd., Pinckney, MI 48169. Please continue to defend the traditional marriage in the state of Michigan.

To All of Michigan law makers via the Commerce Committee:

"I do **not** support HB 5959 or HB 5804." There is already religious exemption from ANY bill it's called the 1st Amendment. The homosexual community wants special rights that no one should be given. Marriage can only be between one man and one woman that's what best for all of society. Stop allowing big money to make laws. Please enter my email into public testimony.

Sincerely,

Pam Ruthenbeck

Clawson, Mi. 48017

Dear Commerce Committee members:

Urge you to vote NO on HB 5959, HB 5804 (RFRA), and any other bill that would enact discriminatory laws providing special legal protection to people based on so-called "sexual orientation" and "gender identity." It will institutionalize discrimination against Christians and people of faith in Michigan.

There is no empirical basis for creation of homosexuals as a protected class of employees. There is no evidence that anyone in Michigan has been fired from their job, denied housing, or refused service in a restaurant because of their sexual activity. As a class homosexuals enjoy privileged rather than

disadvantaged economic and cultural positions in American Society. Their household income is above average; many are influential in culture, business and in politics. They do not need government intervention to improve their position in society.

Yet there are dozens of examples across the country in which Christians and others have been discriminated against (reverse discrimination) , fired, fined, expelled, denied access to public property, stripped of tax benefits, or otherwise punished and penalized under such discriminatory "orientation" and "identity" laws.

The premise that Michigan has to give special protection to homosexual behavior and cross-dressing in order to be economically competitive is false. Actual economic performance data prove exactly the opposite. It is the conservative states that don't have discriminatory "orientation" and "identity" laws that lead the nation in new job creation, income growth, and population migration. Its the liberal states that have discriminatory laws that can't compete economically, such as Illinois and Massachusetts. Think, job-creating powerhouses like Texas, which doesn't have "sexual orientation" or "identity" laws and is experiencing tremendous economy growth. Don't fall for this propaganda.

Don't be fooled by the so called "religious" exemption to any bill. "Religious Freedom Restoration Act" is a weak bill and will not stop attacks against Christians, especially business owners. Best protection for religious freedom in Michigan is to defeat these two bills. Protect people of religious faith in Michigan and vote "NO" on Expanding Michigan's Civil Rights Act to include "sexual orientation" and "gender identity".

Thank you,
Mrs. Joan Jacobson, 5776 Musgrove Hwy., Lake Odessa 48849

Dear MI Representative,

Please Vote against expanding the Elliot Larson Act. Homosexual sexual conduct is not a civil right and is certainly not the same as being Black, Hispanic or female.

Who will stand up for our values and religious freedom? YOU MUST!

Vote "NO" on HB 5804

Vote "NO" on HB 5959

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Mary Pryce

December 2, 2014

Malika Abdul-Basir
Michigan House of Representatives
Commerce Committee Clerk

Ms. Abdul-Basir,

The Human Rights Committee (HRC) was established in 2008 by the Isabella County Board of Commissioners to promote human rights and to review and recommend actions on issues and concerns related to human rights and civil rights in Isabella County. More specifically, the purpose of the HRC includes the following:

1. To provide programming and education to the county on issues related to enhancing positive interaction between diverse members of Isabella County.
2. To serve as a liaison between the county and other local diversity and minority organizations.
3. To collect data regarding acts of discrimination/harassment within Isabella County and share the analysis of that data, with recommendations for action, with the Board of Commissioners and the County Administrator.
4. To monitor the actions taken by appropriate governmental bodies regarding acts of discrimination/harassment reported to the Board of Commissioners and the County Administrator by the Human Rights Committee.
5. To report periodically to the Board of Commissioners and the County Administrator on the extent of violations within Isabella County, and the activities of the HRC.

In 2012, in keeping with our charges, the Human Rights Committee supported the establishment of a Non-discrimination Ordinance in Mt. Pleasant and Union Township, specifying that no person may be denied the equal protection of the law; nor shall any person be denied the enjoyment of his or her civil rights or be discriminated against because of his or her actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, height, weight, marital status, physical or mental disability, family status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The prohibitions against discrimination as provided by that ordinance were intended to supplement state and federal civil rights laws prohibiting discrimination in the areas of employment, public accommodations, and housing.

Currently, thirty six Michigan cities and townships have passed local civil rights ordinances banning discrimination based on both sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, beginning with the City of East Lansing forty-two years ago in 1972, and including Mt. Pleasant and Union Township in 2012.

We understand that Michigan's Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act, Public Act 453 of 1976, prohibits discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, public services and educational facilities based on religion, race, color, national origin, age, sex, height, weight, familial status, or marital status. Representative Jim Dressel (R-Holland) first introduced legislation in 1983 to extend the protection of the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) community. Thirty one years later, neither state nor federal law prohibits discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, and expression. As a result, it remains legal to terminate someone from a job solely for being gay or transgender, to deny someone housing based only on the individual's sexual orientation, and to refuse to serve someone in a restaurant based only on that person's gender identity.

The Human Rights Committee of Isabella County strives to provide as inclusive a community as possible, so that each person is welcomed and his or her contributions affirmed and celebrated. It is in this spirit of inclusivity and in continuous support of human rights and civil rights, that we write to request that the Michigan Legislature enact legislation to amend the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression without further delay.

Sincerely,

Maureen Eke, Chairperson, Human Rights Committee, Isabella County

Members:

Kevin Daum

Shirley Decker

Laura Gonzales

Wendy Hovey

Elizabeth Husbands

Robert Newby

Sue Poindexter

Pleas place this in public testimony

I do not support HB 5959 or HB 5804

Sincerely

Patrick H Duvendeck

197 Coutant St

Flushing, MI 48433

Amy Shawboose

Anne Swift

David Ling, Isabella County Commission Representative on Committee

Dear House Representative Commerce Committee Clerk,

Thank you for your hard work and your diligence to your job. I want to express my view as a voting citizen of Michigan that I oppose House Bill's 5959 & 5804. I do not support the expansion of Elliott-Larsen. I believe the State and Federal Government should protect the freedom's for all law abiding citizens, not just for a special few. We need freedom OF religion and conscience and not FROM them. Please be respectful of all parties involved not just the minority.

Thank you,

Helene Hale

I do **not** support HB 5959 or HB 5804. Please enter my email into public testimony.

- Traditional marriage, one man and one woman is the bedrock of a civil society.
- Traditional marriage is reflective of the collective understanding of virtually every civilization throughout recorded history.
- Traditional marriage pre-dates government.
- Marriage is more than just the love and commitment of two adults.
- Marriage is about what children need, **not** about what adults want.
- Traditional marriage benefits the welfare of children; it is the glue that hold families together which promotes the common good for all.

Mrs. Lucy Mackie

Brighton, 48380

Traditional marriage is not open to interruption, or change. STOP ruining the democratic process by listening to a small segment of the population, special interests, or your own misguided notions.

VOTE for marriage as it was meant to be!!, traditional, no more, no less.

If you want to apease non believers, then give them " civil unions " .

Kenneth L Peterson

